

THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

* ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY *

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NO. 23

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(An Editorial)

From the Philosophy Halls
of the University

Book Reviews

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JOURNAL OF THE PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

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NO. 3

AUTHORITY ?

Recently we have seen that Mr. Thomas A. Edison has declared that he now believes in the immortality of the soul. We are truly gratified that Mr. Edison does believe in the existence of something that corresponds to our "soul"; but we cannot help smiling just a bit at the manner of his presentation of this "new discovery". Surely Mr. Edison has not just now "experienced" the possession of a soul; and yet he offers no proof or line of argument to show how he arrived at this conclusion. He seems to take it for granted that there are people who are waiting for his personal verdict on this subject and who are willing to take his findings on his own authority.

In this supposition of his, Mr. Edison will not be far wrong. Several years ago, when he declared that there was no immortal soul, there were many to take up the cry "There is no soul! Mr. Edison says there is no soul." At that time Mr. Edison offered no proof; his dictum was taken on faith because it was Mr. Edison that said so. Why should it be different today?

Ellwood P. Cubberley goes out of his way to be unfair to the History of Catholic Education and of the Catholic Faith, and he deigns no justification for any of his charges or connotations — in fact only last year, when a scholastic here at the university, challenged a statement of his to the effect that the Jesuits taught that the end justified the means, he finally replied, when pressed for proof, that he did not have any definite proof of any definite Jesuit that taught doctrine, but that he "felt" that it must be true. And yet he is THE authority on the history of education at all outside institutions.

Mr. Watson and Mr. James are THE authorities in psychology here in America. Their statements go unchallenged and their only proof is often their

power to inspire fear by the cry "Old Fashioned Psychology".

Now this it is that makes us smile. The men and women who take all this on the authority of those men; who have taken up the cry "There is no soul!" and who will take up the cry "There is a soul", simply because Mr. Edison has spoken in each instance, are the very ones that taunt Catholics in matters of religion and Scholastics in matters of philosophy for their dependence on Authority.

At first sight there would seem to be something of inconsistency; but on more careful consideration, the inconsistency is found to be only apparent. You must have noticed that these disciples do not depend upon AUTHORITY for what they think and believe. In fact they are careful never to quote an AUTHORITY. How often, now, do you hear Mr. Milikan quoted to prove some theory in Physics? Or Mr. Burbank in connection with potatoes? Or Mr. Edison regarding phonographs and electric lights? Do not mistake me; I mean that when Mr. Milikan presents a theory in physics, in which he is an authority, he must prove it; but let Mr. Milikan, or Mr. Burbank, or Mr. Edison state their views on religion or philosophy, in which they are not authorities, and they are accepted without further ado.

THE COMING CONVENTION

THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION will hold its second annual convention during the coming Christmas holidays at Notre Dame University. We have been unable to obtain any definite information about the exact date or of the program. As far as we know the dates are Dec. 28 and 29. Father John F. McCormick, S.J., Professor of Philosophy at Marquette University, will read a paper on psycho-^{physical} parallelism. Father Pierre B. Bouscaren, S.J., Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University, will lead the discussion of Father McCormick's paper.

E TERTIO ANNO

On Nov. 30, Mr. Vincent O'Flaherty, S.J. made an incomparable contribution to the class. In a brief talk entitled "The Key to the Study of Ethics", he outlined fundamental ethics and indicated the connection and interdependence of the seemingly disconnected theses.

"In wonder all philosophy began; in wonder it ends. The first is the offspring of ignorance; the last is the parent of adoration."

- Coleridge.

The Editorial Staff wishes to extend to all the Contributors and Readers of THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN, its best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

ORACLES OF OBSCURITY

"Thanks for the buggy ride" foots the bill as well for a cross-continent tour in a Pierce, as for a life in a Ford. And somehow or other we mortals take to such meaningless expressions which can be used to cover a world of territory. Why I know a town where "Busy Bee" connotes well shined shoes; I know another where it brings visions of hot-dogs and coffee; and a third where the elite buy their sweet things. Even turn from these more Montaigne-like patrons of shoe-shining parlors and candy shops to smell-of-the-tome philosophers, and you find exactly the same weakness. In fact a little experience awakens in one awaiting the explanation of a modern philosophical term something akin to the suspense with which the ordinary individual watches for the mysterious sustenance ordered from a menu at the Ritz. You just don't know what it's going to be.

A word like that is "Absolute". In non-Scholastic parlance, Absolute is the name that is used in place of a deserved question mark; and it is explained as meaning anything from nebulous matter of the lowest rank to the most theistic spiritual concepts. Try to trace to its fundamentals the system of the vast majority of "untrammelled philosophers" of the century, and invariably a few unintelligible mental gymnastics will produce "Absolute". And there you are; the problem is solved; the child has been named, and what more do you want. Naturally, of course, to monist philosophers that word is necessarily the last word in mental processes.

Mr. Paul Carus, the editor of the Monist, tells us that "Monism (a word coined by Wolff, Kant's master) is used to characterize such philosophies as recognize the existence of one ultimate form of reality only, be it matter or spirit." Immanuel Kant did not use the term, "But", Carus goes on to say, "the better the interconnection of all things began to be understood, the more was the idea of unity appreciated. Kant left a method, but his successors endeavored to work out systems of philosophy, and everyone of them tried to discover the oneness of existence." We are told that it is a "unitary world-conception" with "consistency" as its underlying principle. Incidentally he adds, "any dualistic conception indicates that there is a problem to be solved, and the establishment of monism is everywhere the final aim of all science."

Of Kant's idealistic successors who turned out to be thorough-going monists, the German triumvirate - Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel - are especially worthy of note. All three gave their lives "to discover the oneness of existence". All three found their solution in the Absolute; but their agreement went little past the choice of a name for the mental offspring.

Johann Fichte really meant to form Kantian thought into a complete system. Being Kantian, he is, of course, idealistic; but he developed a special kind of idealism, a subjective idealism. His one, his single fundamental principle underlying all was the EGO. He called it the "Absolute". Fichte established the oneness of existence in his doctrine of the all-sufficiency of the EGO by showing that the objective world is derived from the EGO, and that it is in part the expression of the nature of the latter, and in part the necessary condition of its realization and development. For him the subject is the one and all. The "thing-in-itself" of Kant is by Fichte absorbed in the subject, resulting in subjective, idealistic monism. His conviction was that thought cannot be reduced to being, but being can be derived from thought. The EGO, of course, is not individual, but the universal self-consciousness. His

system is sometimes called "pan-egoism". Fichte, then, found his "Absolute" to be the EGO, a universal self-consciousness from which he deduces all thought and all being, as the Jew of Antwerp derived all from one substance.

The one of Friedrich Schelling was not the same kind of a "Busy Bee". In fact, his find was quite different. It is difficult, however, to find out just what Mr. Schelling did mean; his one is so changeable that one can scarcely pin him down to a definite theory. Of his five systems, the third seems to have had the greatest vogue. And, besides, it was during the time that his "Absolute" was the "Identity of the real and the ideal" that he did his best literary work - and he wrote charmingly. The subjective idealism of Fichte seemed a bit unreasonable to Schelling; so he attempted to modify it by distinguishing the philosophy of nature from that of spirit, and by recognizing the prius of both nature and spirit - a common principle from which both were deduced. His monistic principle, of course, is the "Absolute"; his word of explanation is that it means "the identity of the real and the ideal". According to Schelling, we have a philosophy of nature, a philosophy of spirit, and, finally, the Absolute in whom both are identified.

The only intelligible words we can use for Schelling's system is to call it a system of objective, idealistic monism. His correction of Fichte consisted in saying that besides the philosophy of spirit, there was really a philosophy of nature; and, secondly, that beyond the to ego there was a higher principle. Neither the ego nor the non-ego can be supreme, since they are merely relative concepts. The identity of the real and the ideal, the ego and the non-ego is the supreme ultimate principle.

Fichte took up Kant's thought and merged the "thing-in-itself" (object) in the activity of the EGO (subject). Schelling said it was all wrong, and he affected a synthesis by merging both the subject and the object in the indifference of the Absolute. To Hegel both were wrong; and his correction of them has given him a far more brilliant niche than either Fichte or Schelling - perhaps because he is more obscure. His one is an Absolute of immanent activity. Fichte's system was subjective idealism, Schelling's objective idealism, and now comes the unintelligible dynamic idealism of Hegel. His line of thought dressed in language is something like this. He begins with the triad of Idea, nature and spirit. Picking up the echoes of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; he develops them in a rather novel fashion. There is the thesis, the original coming; and antithesis, which is the struggle going on through life; and, finally, the synthesis, or joining in an ultimate principle. Unlike the Brahman system, however, Hegel does not let his sparks of the divine return to their first principle, but to something different, a something which is neither spirit nor matter, but logical merely, or conceptual. His Absolute is nothing other than the reality of the ens ut sic, the realization of the universal idea. To him the "rational alone is real". God is only in so far as He is conceived under the category of Becoming. He is simply a process. Remove the thinking mind, and you do away with God.

In Turner's words: "According to Schelling nature and spirit proceed from the Absolute; according to Hegel, the Absolute becomes successively nature and spirit. In Hegel's system the Absolute is a process rather than a source. It differs from the Spinozistic substance in this that it is one of infinite activity, while Spinoza found his substance one of 'static immensity and undifferentiated plentitude'."

Fichte retained to the last his notion of the supremacy of practical reason. Schelling, the literateur, gave equal play to the real and the ideal, the rational and the imaginative. Hegel, however, with his "the rational alone is real", and "all being is thought realized", maintained that the rational, the ideal was supreme. The theoretical is far above the practical, and thought transcends action throughout his system. Philosophy's sole task, he firmly believed, was to interpret phenomena in terms of the Absolute, which is thought. And these are the oracles of obscurity whom the monistic world of today is following. What think ye?

Wilfred Mallon, S.J.

FROM THE PHILOSOPHICAL
HALLS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Some excellent--- very excellent, and interesting papers were and are being written and read here in the Philosophical Halls of the University. In second year, these papers deal with cosmological subjects, and in third, with historical and critical subjects.

SECOND YEAR

Mr. Jorgensen	Pantheism
Mr. Witte	The Formation of the Earth
Mr. Prendergast	How Old Is the Universe?
Mr. Cavanaugh	Formation of the Solar System according to the Chamberlain-Moulten Theory
Mr. Wirtenberger	Einstein's Theory of Relativity
Mr. J. Doyle	Duration and Its Various Forms

THIRD YEAR

Mr. Bilstein	St. Anselm and the Ontological Argument
Mr. Cantwell	Albert, the Great
Mr. Keeven	The Epicureans
Mr. Cahill	John Scotus Erigena
Mr. O'Flaherty	The Older Theories of the Formation of the Universe
Mr. W. Doyle	Abelard
Mr. McCormack	The Soul in Pre-Scholastic Philosophy

All these men have devoted a great amount of time and labor to the production of these papers. The result is a collection of essays interestingly and elegantly written,—a real contribution to the collateral literature on Cosmology and the History of Philosophy. THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN regrets that it cannot publish any of these, because of their length. However, the idea of preparing papers for the class may be worth while. Here it has been very successful. It gets the man who is preparing the paper interested in the subject, lends variety to the class, benefits the members by giving them information which would be otherwise inaccessible to them, and results in the production of some really excellent works. The following are yet to be given in third year:

Mr. Reddy	The Psychology of Aristotle
Mr. FitzGibbon	Plato, the Philosopher
Mr. O'Brien	The Philosophy of Cicero
Mr. Krizek	The Carolingian Period (of Philosophy)
Mr. Roche	Jewish Philosophy
Mr. Welfle	Hindu Cosmogony
Mr. Walter	Roger Bacon

THE DISPUTATIONS

The first year men were permitted their first glimpse of the Medieval University on Wednesday, November 24, 1926. Few realize just how much of the spirit of the middle ages is preserved in this large, modern University of St. Louis, -- few even of her own students, even those of the college of Arts and Sciences, who laughed and talked in the corridors outside, entirely oblivious and unconscious of the quarterly Disputations that were going on in the Little Theatre on the second floor of the Collège Building.

The subject matter for the disputations of the Autumn Term were these from Theodicy, Ethics and Cosmology. The following is the program.

EX THEOLOGIA NATURALI

1. Existentia Dei ut causa primae improductae rerum mundanarum probatur argumentis metaphysicis.
2. Existentia Dei ut entis intelligentis et personalis ostenditur argumentis physicis.
3. Existentia Dei ut numinis hominibus superioris eisque colendi, demonstratur argumentis moralibus.
4. Deus est simpliciter infinitus. De Deo tamen perfectiones creaturarum predicantur in sensu eminentiore.
5. Deus est simplicissimus et tamen recte distinguimus inter attributa di distinctione virtuali extrinseca.
6. Deus est tum physice tum moraliter immutabilis.

From these theses Mr. John J. O'Brien, S. J. was called upon by Mr. Ferdinand Keeven, S. J. to defend the third; and by Mr. Gerald H. Fitzgibbon, S. J. the

EX ETHICA

1. Homo a Deo destinatur ad perfectam beatitudinem, cujus objectum necessarium et per se sufficiens est Deus.
2. Perfecta beatitudo in hac vita obtineri nequit, quapropter finis vitae praesentis supremus in eo consistit, ut homo actiones suas recte ordinando ad finem ultimum vitae futurae se disponat.
3. Proximum criterium objectivum moralitatis est natura rationalis quae adaequatae sumpta.
4. Principia seu determinantia moralitatis in actu humano sunt objectum, finis et circumstantiae.
5. Rejiciendum est systema moralis positivismi.

Mr. Vincent M. O'Flaherty, S. J. defended the third and fifth of these theses against Messrs. Richard A. Welfle, S. J. and John F. Byrne, S. J. In both discussions objections from the floor were well handled, the Moderator each time closing the discussion by "Ad alium". The defendant indulged in a metaphysical caprice in dealing with an objection by making use of six sub-distinctions.

EX COSMOLOGIA

1. Mundus extensionem infinitam non habet.
2. Nulla ratio philosophica obstat quominus formatio mundi anorganici per evolutione per causas naturales tribuatur, immo Deo valde conveniens id apparet.
3. In rebus naturalibus admittenda est activitas cujus causa ultima est extramundana.

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JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, O. F. M.

"Oh, he is only a dunce!" This was the mocking retort given to that group of scholars called Scotists by the opponents of scholastic philosophy. At that time the jibe was made in allusion to their frequently obscure manner of reasoning. The word has survived in our language, but has degenerated so that it means now one of weak mentality, an imbecile incapable of learning, fit to wear but the dunce cap and to sit in the corner. However worthy or unworthy of this title the followers of Duns Scotus might have been, — and occasionally there was some justification for it— yet the man, himself, as will become evident, was entirely undeserving of any such connotation's being attached to his name.

Many histories of English Literature make no mention of this Franciscan monk. One history says: "and there were then teaching at Oxford University some Franciscan monks such as Duns Scotus and William Occam, who wrote very learned things about which the common people know nothing and had no influence on them nor on English literature." As a summary of his influence some say that in 1535 (?) Duns Scotus was dragged from his lofty pedestal at Oxford and Cambridge where his name had been honored and they quote the graphic words of one of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners, "We found all the great Quadrant Court full of the leaves of Duns, the wind blowing them into every corner."

In spite of these adverse critics, Duns Scotus did exert a strong influence upon the thinking, learned men of his day, and his writings, all in Latin, were objects of close study. It is unjust to expose a man's worst features, nakedly and alone, to those who do not know his better side and the conditions which partly explain the rest of his natural genius and temperament.

Because of its significance to us as Catholics, before we consider the man and his work, let us see in what light the Catholic Church regards him. The Church has not condemned a single proposition of his. On the contrary, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which he so strongly advocated and defended against the Dominicans, while he taught at Paris, has been declared a dogma of Faith. In this conflict he won the proud title, ~~of~~ an index of his mental acumen, "Doctor Subtilis". So strong an impression did he make in this defense that in 1387, about eighty years after his death, the University of Paris required of all those taking the doctor's degree, an oath to defend the Immaculate Conception. A process of his beatification is under way at Rome. At least a decree recognizing his cultus was issued on the eleventh of January, 1907.

John Duns Scotus was born about 1270 and died in 1308 at Cologne, Germany where his body rests. His birth-place is unknown. Many with good proofs declare that it was Ireland. On his tomb is carved the epithet,

"Scotia (Ireland) me genuit, Anglia me suscepit,

Gallia me docuit, Colonia me tenet."

Whatever the doubt of his birth-place may be, he is English in education and citizenship. He taught many years at Oxford and belonged to the English province of his Order. He took his degree at Paris, and ended his life teaching at Cologne, true type of the Mediaeval cosmopolitan scholar, who for the love of learning claimed scarcely any land as his home (native home) but wandered far and wide to diffuse the light of culture and of wisdom.

The Franciscan tradition, as testified to by Alexander Hales and Roger Bacon, was less opposed to novel forms of opinion than was the more dogmatic Dominican. Hence the critical analysis and subtlety of Duns Scotus were allowed much freedom. His intricate maze of reasoning has been fitly styled dialectic arch orchestrations. But in these orchestrations there was, it must be remembered, a central theme, a unity of thought which men, unable or too slothful to pierce and unravel, have failed to discover and hence in hasty judgement declared his writings to be only words, windy and without solidarity.

John Duns Scotus then was renowned for his critical power and subtlety but he was, like many men, stronger in the criticisms of the ~~opponents~~ opinions of others than in a construction of a system of his own. He tended to enlarge the doctrines (in number) already recognized as capable of being apprehended by faith alone. In this matter he comes close to the false notion that what is true in theology may be false in philosophy.

Scotus was understood and appreciated by his generation. As a master of theology, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics, he was a popular teacher. He was a dreaded opponent in debate. Ridicule, the keen and effective weapon of mean, carping minds, was the only method some used to withstand him. "If you enter his lists, you are lost; the way to attack him is to stand without and laugh." This method was followed afterwards too, against the Duns-men, or Dunces who followed his method of reasoning.

Indeed the next generation was full of Scotists, as they are always styled who wished to be more subtle than their master, but usually succeeded in becoming inane. The verbal controversy of the Scotists and Thomists is one reason why scholastic philosophy failed at the time to accomodate itself to the universally rising scientific movement.

As all scientific literature of that day and even down to later times, was Latin, John Duns Scotus had an influence, as is now evident, upon literature in general. English literature will be indebted to him after his day for all the young minds which he trained and aroused to thought during his years at Oxford, e.g. William Occam. Precisely because of his criticism of Aquinas, Albert, and Bonaventure, he kept the stream of intellectual thought from becoming sluggish and too yielding in admitting an argument.

His principal works were: "Opus Oxoniense", a commentary on the Books of Sentences; "Reportata Parisensia", lecture notes compiled by his disciples at Paris; and "Quaestiones Quodlibetales", his dissertations for his doctor's degree. Unlike most writers of his day he wrote no "Summa Theologica".

Finally we can say of Scotus that he innaugarated an age of talent rather than of genius. Subtle and penetrating as his mind was, he is placed below Aquinas, Albert, and Bonaventure because while he excelled even the greatest of the schoolmen in critical acumen, yet he lacked synthetic power which was remarkable in St. Thomas, and which more than any other quality of mind stamps the writer or thinker as a philosopher.

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William F. Ryan, S.J.

THE DISPUTATIONS
(continued from page thirty eight)

4. Secundum leges naturae bene statutus cursus naturae finem aliquando habebit.

5. Mundus non necessario est ab aeterno.

6. Mundus initium in tempore de facto habuit.

Mr. James J. Mahoney, S.J. was the defendant in Cosmology. He explained and proved to the satisfaction of his hearers the third and sixth theses against the objections of G. P. Prendergast, S.J. and A.A. Ruetz, C.R. In the afternoon session, as in the morning, lively discussion was evoked by objections from the "auditores".

Mr. Louis E. Meyer, S.J. read a scholarly paper in the history of philosophy. He treated the subject of Indian Philosophy which has been before the public eye of late. His paper was entitled "The Origin of the Vedanta in India: The Authority upon Which They Rest".

Joseph A. Foley, S.J.

E PRIMO ANNO

Since the last appearance of THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN, one of the first year philosophy study clubs has had a number of interesting programs. On Saturday November 13, Mr. Lyons gave a well knit outline of the course of Critica. On the following Saturday evening, Mr. Murphy presented a chalk talk on some of the difficulties of Minor Logic which were not already cleared up, notably his system of dealing with the judgement. On the 27th of November, Mr. O'Hara gave another view on the necessity of a course in Critica. And on December 4, perplexing points in the first few theses were touched on in a lively general discussion. The last meeting was well handled by Mr. Tainter who sought to extract the kernels from the first few theses and to set them before the members in a graphic fashion. The meetings are steadily increasing in animation and interest.

Men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, the mighty billows of the sea, the compass of the waters — and pass themselves by.

*

TOWING WITH TRUTH

Truth is very tolerant. It permits close, critical inspection, and does not demand our acceptance until its evidence is so clearly manifest that under pain of intellectual suicide we must assent. But there is one thing that truth cannot brook: it will not be treated as a plaything. And the glaring inconsistency to which Descartes fell victim attests that it is dangerous to toy with truth.

Perhaps the surest way for one to have severed friendly relations with Descartes would have been to accuse him of universal scepticism. His keen resentment at this, however, would have been another case of the truth being more bitter than lies. For it will be seen that in his famous method, the Cartesian Doubt, the terms of scepticism are, indeed, encysted.

It may be said that in general there are two ways of doubting: one may actually doubt and there remain, making of doubt a permanent goal or end. And this is scepticism. Then, one may simulate a suspense of the assent, for the sake of acquiring a former grasp on what is already known and believed to be true, thereby making of this quasi doubt a means to an end, that end being fuller knowledge about the truth in question. This is correctly termed a "quasi" doubt for the reason that there can be no real doubt termed concerning a truth to which the mind has already given its assent.

This latter manner of doubting, known as provisional or methodical doubt, is only a means of critically inspecting the validity of the grounds for our assent to certain truths. It is altogether legitimate, and has ever been a common practise both in philosophy and in science. Euclid made use of it when he began the demonstrations of his theorems in geometry by supposing that the theorems were not true. Aristotle employed it, recommending that a problem be solved by first doubting and examining the difficulties involved. And anyone acquainted with Scholastic philosophy knows that every thesis that admits of strict demonstration is but an application of this methodical doubt.

But now, whereas this manner of inquiry is, indeed, legitimate in the case of those particular truths which are capable of strict demonstration, it is, nevertheless, sheer folly to attempt to apply it to all truths, adopting the principle that nothing is to be accepted unless it be first demonstrated. There are some judgements so immediately evident that they cannot be demonstrated, nor do they require it. Their evidence is already actually present to the mind. Can I in any way doubt, for instance, that I am here and now writing? As I stand exposed to the scorching noon-day blaze, can I doubt that the sun is shining? Can I doubt that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time, or that two and two make four? Try diligently as I may I find that I cannot. Nor is there any reason in attempting to question about such truths. The sole purpose of employing methodical doubt about any judgement is to inquire into, and critically examine the foundation upon which the truth of that proposition rests. But in the case of such immediately evident propositions, the mind already sees this; it cannot help seeing it. And one who refuses to accept without proof the truth of such immediately evident propositions can never hope to prove any truth whatsoever, for he destroys the very basis of all proof. The unreasonable-ness of such a position has been likened to the absurdity of one who would "throw light on the sun". Were one to admit no

light whatever except reflected light, he would soon have no light at all. There must be some bodies that contain light in themselves. And in like manner there certain truths that have their evidence in themselves.

Descartes, however, saw fit to ignore this fact. During that sojourn of his on the Danube, while with the army of the Elector of Bavaria, it seemed to be forcibly brought home to him that, after all, the mind is quite a hodgepodge of truth and error; that it is quite impossible to distinguish one from the other. The mind is frequently misleading. That which was once held to be absolutely certain is later rejected as erroneous. In a word he found it necessary to suspect all the traditional knowledge that he had acquired. He proposed to remedy this. He would do so by emptying his mind of all that it possessed, and adopting the principle that nothing is to be accepted as true until it has proven itself true. All that till now had gained admittance to his mind had to go; not, indeed, that it was to be rejected forever, but until it could prove itself worthy of acceptance. There was no truth he did not challenge. His faculties were suspected. The testimony of the senses was brought into question. He entertained misgivings about the mind's ability to attain to truth. The existence of the material universe became an object of suspicion.

This, then is the Cartesian doubt. In order to be sure of truth, empty the mind completely, suspect everything, and then admit only what proves itself to be true. Others have preferred another method, and seem to have fared better than Descartes. Rather than start out with a grand gesture of universal doubt, they have elected to begin by believing all opinions, and then to cast out the untenable.

Now that Descartes had rid his mind of all traditional belief, he proceeded at once to enthrone truth securely, little realizing that he had already bowed down in obeisance to scepticism. As he casts a critical eye over the heap of offal which he has rejected from his mind, lo! this great truth is suddenly revealed; he is certain that he is conscious; that he thinks, and, as a thinking subject, that he exists. Here is the one truth he cannot doubt. And the grand Cartesian principle is born; cogito, ergo sum.

It is not necessary to go farther, Descartes toyed with truth, and truth is already avenged. For, in the words of Fr. Rickaby, S.J., "Descartes falls into the inconsistencies of the universal sceptics, and is logically forced to abide with those in whose company he is unwilling to remain. He professes to be able, 'seriously and for well-weighed reasons', to doubt the validity of his faculties, and truths which present themselves to his mind with the force of evidence. Out of such doubt there is no rescue. A man so circumstanced has no right even to his 'I think, therefore I exist'; and if he says that on this point doubt is impossible, he says so only by revoking what he has said before; for if his whole nature may be radically delusive, it may be delusive here. He says the doubter cannot doubt his own existence: but neither can the doubter doubt consistently the validity of his own faculties and of evident propositions."

Dr. Richard A. Welfle, S.J.

On November 27, Paul F. Smith read a paper on the historical aspect of Hylomorphism. During the discussion that followed was directed toward a clearer understanding of the causes which led Scholastic Philosophers to differ from one another in minor points of the doctrine.

With the oral examination as the only barrier between now and Christmas, the seminar deserted "Sweetness and Light" and became down right pragmatic. James Mahoney led a discussion on December 2, on the interrelation of cosmological theses. The next two meetings will be directed towards a discussion of class-room matter.

The attention of the members of the seminar was directed towards a study of John Stuart Mill. On Dec. 2, Chas. O'Hara read a very interesting paper on the education and philosophical training of this philosopher. In the discussion that followed, many interesting opinions on Mill's inductive studies were expressed. On the 16th, William Ryan will read a paper on "Benjamin Franklin, the American Socrates". This meeting will conclude the activities of the seminar for this most fruitful year.

P.F.S.

ARISTOTLE

384-322 B.C.

ARISTOTLE, the greatest pagan philosopher; b. Stagira in Chalcidice 384 B.C. d. Chalcis, Euboea 322 B.C. To Athens when 18; a pupil of Plato there until 37. In ~~335/334/333/332/331~~ Asia Minor, married. In 342 tutor to Alex. the Great at Stagira. In 335 opened his school in Athens: known as Lyceum and as Peripatetic. Most of his writings composed from 335 to 322.

Evaluation: The system is scientific rather than metaphysical. Starting point is observation rather than intuition. Its aim is to find the ultimate cause of things rather than to determine the value (ethical or aesthetic) of things. Its influence extends beyond science and philosophy.

Philosophy, "science of the universal essence of that which is actual." Method: "assent from the study of the particular phenomena to the knowledge of essences"--the scientific view of philosophy. Division: I. Logic (analytic, if regarded as a study preliminary to phil.); II. Theoretical Philosophy- Metaphysics, Physics, Mathematics; III. Practical Philosophy- Ethics, Politics; IV. Poetical Philosophy.

I. Logic: the Categories, Predicables, Syllogism, Origin of Ideas.

Metaphysics: Being as such, Actuality, Potentiality, Matter & Form, Kinds of Car

Physics: Study of Nature: Space, time, movement, the four elements; Psychology: soul or principle of life, external and internal senses, intellect and will.

Mathematics: "science of immovable things."

IV. Ethics: "In what does happiness consist?" is the starting point. "The good proper to his rational nature." Reason; Virtue: moral, theoretical- intellectual.

Intellect - moral; theoretical - practical; contemplative - active.

Politics: man a "social animal", complete happiness in social life. State not absolute, no ideal state.

IV. Poetical Philosophy: art, aesthetics, the beautiful.

(Reference: Cath. Ency.)

John E. Cantwell, S.J.

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Karl Marx's Capital: An Introductory Essay, by A. D. Lindsay. Oxford University Press, American Branch. New York. \$1.00. 1926.

In the introduction, the author sets forth very clearly the scope and purpose of this work-- he is writing a book about another book. Immediately he indicates the limits and possibilities of such a task. In the first place, he says, such commentaries can by no means take the place of the original. Secondly, it is indefensible to treat the original either in the spirit of "uncritical condemnation", or in the spirit of "uncritical praise". For, if the book is a great book, as Lindsay holds CAPITAL to be, there are bound to be inconsistencies in the production. The logic of this is not clear, but Lindsay explains his position in the following words: "The original thinker is too much occupied in trying to express the creative thought which is welling up in him to trouble himself about getting it all straightened out." And so, it is with a critical eye to the soundness of the work that Lindsay introduces the student to CAPITAL.

Books about books can be of service in two particular ways, he says. First giving the circumstances and conditions in which the original was produced, that the reader may be able to separate out the perennial, enduring truths at which the author is aiming, by first understanding the particular time-bound points of the work. Again, the more original an author's work, the greater is the penetration of it that can be gained by a study of the sources whence he derived it. These two ends books about books can accomplish for the student of great masterpieces.

In CAPITAL, says Lindsay, we find inconsistencies in the text because it was the product of an author of two distinct and contrary traits. Marx was revolutionary not in thought alone, but in action also. He was a scholar and author of weighty volumes, but an energetic pamphleteer too; a laborious student but an active agitator. Now CAPITAL is not the production of only one of these aspects of Marx's character, but of both. It is the work of Marx, the scholar, scientifically and abstractly considering society, and of Marx "the passionate agitator and fighter". But the views of Marx the Communist, with his wealth of learning and wide historical vision, trying to cope with the social problems of man according to abstract principles, do not always combine with the views of Marx the Revolutionary Socialist, whose passionate sympathy with the victims of the industrial revolution made his political agitation completely concrete and personal. His indignation at the position of the worker breaks through the scientific treatment with which the scholar wishes to handle social problems.

"Marx was an original thinker..... a revolutionary thinker who put together not one or two propositions but whole systems of thought in such a way that something emerged which is completely new, though it is born of the old." Marx combined the doctrines of the "Hegelians, collectivists...who laid the basis of modern political theory" with the doctrines of the Utilitarians, the source of the doctrines of the Classical English Economists who "laid the basis of modern economics." In a study of what Marx derived from both these schools, we shall better understand his originality and his defects.

In the above manner, Lindsay expounds the purpose and method of his book.

He carries them out by discussions of 'Marx and Hegel', 'Economic Determinism', 'The Labor Theory of Value', 'Marx's Account of Surplus Value and of the Collective Laborer', and 'Marx and Rousseau'.

Marx called himself a follower of Hegel in his political theory. He did not however accept Hegel's doctrine entire, but changed it, and for the better, as he himself said. Both applied the dialectic method of finding truth, that is in a conflict of ideas, to history in making progress. But, whereas Hegel, in looking on society as essentially changing and developing, considered this development to have stopped at his time, Marx and others contended that the change and development would go on in the future, and that they were justified in trying to predict the future. The method used by both was abstract; they were speaking of things not as they are, but as each conceived they should be. This point, the abstract treatment of problems, should be kept in mind. CAPITAL is an abstract handling of the problems it deals with.

To this political teaching Marx welded the English individualistic economic system and developed therefrom the doctrine of Economic Determinism, "the first outcome of the union of two schools of thought, one dominated by the Hegelian conception of historical development and the other by English individualistic economics". Lindsay discusses critically the relative importance which Marx attaches to each of the two elements from which he formed his doctrine. For, more than one interpretation has been put upon Marx's writings about this topic.

The Labor Theory is next considered. It is a knotty question. To some it is the keystone to Marxism; to others Socialists, it is a thing to be rejected. It is the point of Marx's doctrine most often attacked. Lindsay is critical as usual, searching carefully for a rational account of the divergent opinions that have been expressed on this point, and sifting out the proper one. He traces the historical influences also, the times and circumstances in which the doctrine was developed.

In a like scholarly manner the author discusses Marx's Account of Surplus Value and of The Collective Laborer. Finally he makes a comparison, for the sake of illustration, between the work of Marx in the economic field and that of Rousseau in the field of politics. Both are idealists, each evolving an ideal existence, and attending little to the practical problems concerned in the application of their theories, blinded to practical difficulties by the beautiful simplicity of the ideal. The results: followers of the two men misunderstood and wrongly applied the principles of their leaders, critics judged the theories built on postulated ideals as though they were erected on the society of the day.

Professor Lindsay writes with a clarity and simplicity seldom met with. And yet the book is not lightly gone through, nor swiftly, but demands slow reading and painstaking attention. The difficulty is in the subject itself. What this would be if treated in any other than the author's lucid style, is appalling to the imagination.

John E. Cantwell

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